

State Senator
Tony Guglielmo



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State Senator
Tony Guglielmo

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www.senaterepublicans.ct.gov

UConn Reform

Since 1995, the state of Connecticut has invested over \$2 billion in capital improvements to the University of Connecticut. The transformation of the UConn campus over the last decade has indeed been dramatic, but with an enormous amount of construction taking place, some mismanagement within the building process has occurred, resulting in numerous building code violations and design flaws.

That is why this year the legislature passed a measure that



provides independent oversight of construction projects at UConn. The bill establishes two mechanisms to provide independent oversight of construction projects at the University, including Board of Trustee audits and independent committee reviews of University policies and procedures that are necessary for construction process compliance.

Gasoline Prices

In an effort to reduce the high costs of gasoline in our region, this year I supported a measure that would have banned the practice of “zone pricing” of gasoline in Connecticut. Zone pricing is where oil companies charge dealers in different geographic areas different prices for the same grade of gasoline, depending on location and demand. In fact, gasoline in one location may very well get an entirely different price than that of another location even though the gas came out of the same truck. This legislation, which overwhelmingly passed the Senate but was not taken up in the House, would have replaced zone pricing with a fair wholesale price system making gasoline prices throughout the state more uniform.

I also supported reducing the gross earnings tax on gasoline sales. This tax is applied to the first sale of gasoline between a major oil company and a distributor or a franchise retailer. In Connecticut the tax is applied before the gas is resold to the consumer and is determined by the wholesale price, thus the higher the wholesale price of gasoline the higher the tax, which is inevitably passed on to the consumer.

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State Senator *Tony Guglielmo*

Dear Neighbor,

The 2006 Session of the Connecticut General Assembly has come to an end. Under the leadership of Governor M. Jodi Rell, the legislature finished its business on time for the second consecutive year and without the partisan bickering of years past.

Connecticut operates under a biennial (two-year) budget system. The two-year state budget is always ratified in the first year of the biennium. This being the second year, the main responsibility of the legislature in 2006 was to make adjustments to the state budget that was adopted last year. I am pleased to report that in a bipartisan manner, the legislature passed a budget that holds taxes and spending increases in check while providing additional state aid to our local communities.

There were many other issues that came before the legislature this year. While many important initiatives passed both chambers of the legislature and became law, other measures were not as fortunate and fell victim to the confines of the "short session."

Please take a moment to read about some of the important measures that were addressed in 2006. You can also visit my Senate website at www.senaterepublicans.ct.gov for updates on events taking place at the Capitol.

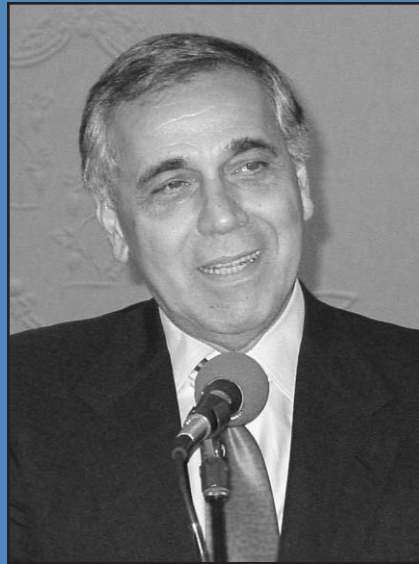
If you have any specific questions regarding these issues or any issue concerning state government, please feel free to call my office at 1-800-842-1421, e-mail me at

Anthony.Guglielmo@cga.ct.gov or write to me at: Senator Tony Guglielmo, Legislative Office Building, Room 3400, Hartford, CT 06106.

Sincerely,



State Senator
35th District



Budget

Under the strong leadership of Governor M. Jodi Rell, the legislature this year adopted a \$16.07 billion state budget. While the budget includes a modest increase in state spending, it also provides tax relief for individuals, businesses and municipalities. What's more, the revised budget makes a significant deposit into the Rainy Day Fund, and fully funds the Teachers' Retirement Fund for the 2006 and 2007 fiscal years. The adjusted state budget also provides over \$115 million in new state aid to Connecticut's municipalities, including an additional \$568,000 to the towns of the 35th District.

Taxes

As a member of the legislature's Finance Revenue & Bonding Committee, I worked hard this year to make sure that the adjusted state budget would be fair to taxpayers. That is why I am very pleased to report that the property tax credit that currently stands at \$350 will be restored to \$500 beginning with the 2006 income tax year.

In an effort to create and maintain quality jobs in our state, the legislature has made a series of tax changes that affect businesses, including the repeal of the 15% corporate surcharge for the 2007 income year.

Also passed this year was legislation that allows for income tax deductions for contributions to the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET), Connecticut's state sponsored college savings plan. The new law allows deductions up to \$5,000 for single filers and \$10,000 for joint filers. In addition, it lets taxpayers carry forward any unused deductions for the five following years, as long as each deduction does not exceed the annual maximums.

Sex Offender Legislation

The State Senate unanimously passed stronger penalties for pedophiles who sexually assault children. The bill created mandatory sentences of 25 years in prison for a first time offense and life imprisonment for a second for persons convicted of first degree, second degree or aggravated sexual assault of a child under age 13, as well as for promoting prostitution of a minor. The bill was patterned after Florida's "Jessica's Law," which was passed in response to the kidnapping and killing of 9 year old Jessica Lunsford by a released pedophile. Sadly, the measure was never taken up in the House of Representatives.



Campaign Finance

One year after the General Assembly passed major campaign finance reform, the Senate worked to close several loopholes that were never the intention of that legislation. These loopholes limited participation and maintained certain special interest money that the new law was designed to reduce. In the final minutes of this year's session, the General Assembly passed legislation that creates limits on the amount that Political Action Committees (PACs) can expend on organization expenditures, beginning with next year's election cycle. Under the prior law such contributions to party and legislative leadership committees were unlimited.

Last year's reform law also made it more difficult for minor party candidates to qualify for public funds, another unintentional flaw. The 2006 legislation corrects this problem by providing supplemental grants to minor and petitioning party candidates who qualify and allows them to collect contributions as well.

Eminent Domain

One of the most disappointing aspects of this year's session was the failure of the General Assembly to act on the issue of eminent domain. Expanding our eminent domain laws so that private developers can make more money is a very disturbing and dangerous proposition and walks all over the basic right of every American to own property. What's even more troubling is that the Supreme Court decision of last year that allowed for eminent domain for economic development purposes was based on a case right here in Connecticut. The *Kelo vs. New London* decision poses a monumental threat to homeowners everywhere in that it allows any city or town to take individual homes away from people and turn them over to private developers as long as the government does it in the name of the "public good." This is wrong and is why I, along with my Republican colleagues, supported legislation that would have prohibited the seizure of homes for economic development. Unfortunately, the measure failed mainly along party lines. It is my belief that, as legislators, one of our most important responsibilities is to protect the rights of homeowners and this is something I will continue to fight for.

